

THE CAVALRY FIGHT AT BOONSBORO GRAPHICALLY DESCRIBED.

The Ninth Virginia and Eighth Illinois Regiments Cross Sabres—The Former Suffer Severely, But Capture Some Prisoners.

To the Editor of the Dispatch:  
During the campaign in Maryland in 1862 the Ninth Virginia Cavalry was attached to the brigade commanded by General Fitz Lee. After nine days spent among the fine hay and rich yellow cornfields of Montgomery and Frederick counties, the regiment crossed the Catoctin mountain at Hamburg at dawn on the morning of September 14th. The morning was a fine, clear day, and the hills were a mass of green, with the manufacture of brandy seemed to be the chief employment of the villagers, and at the early hour of our passage through the place both the men and women gave proof that they were free imbibers of the product of their stills, and it was not easy to find a sober inhabitant of either sex.

To our troops, descending the western slope of the mountain, the peaceful valley below dotted over with well-tended farms, with a bold stream winding among the hills, and a scene of unusual beauty and loveliness. Near a large grist-mill the command was halted, after a march of several hours, and, here rested beneath the shade of a large apple orchard until 4 o'clock, in rapid succession the distant boom of artillery assured us of the bloody conflict going on at South Mountain, the issue of which we were in suspense to know. The march in the afternoon brought the command to the foot of the mountain, where a brief halt was made after nightfall to rest and feed the horses. Near midnight the march was resumed in the direction of the mountain pass above Boonsboro. The disaster to our army in the fight of the previous day was now manifest as artillery, ambulances, and infantry were met retreating down the mountain. The brigade, having ascended a mile and a half, perhaps, the dawn, was met by the enemy's cavalry, and the nature of the ground was ill-suited to the operation of cavalry, and much relief was felt when, at dawn, we began to fall back towards Boonsboro. Our retreat was a hasty one, and the enemy's cavalry, with the aid of the morning light, could be seen as we entered Boonsboro. More than once we were faced about as we retreated, as if to repel a threatened charge by

Having been halted in streets of Boonsboro, the men, after being so long in the saddle, were allowed to dismount, and for some time remained in this position, some standing by their horses or sitting down on the curbstones and holding their bridles. Suddenly, the order "Mount!" "Mount!" resounded down the street, and simultaneously with the order, pistols and carbines were heard near at hand. Before the men could mount and form ranks, the rear guard, retreating at full speed, dashed into our already confused column, and in an instant the ranks of the enemy's cavalry, with a mass of horses and horsemen, so jammed together as to make motion impossible for most of them. At the same time the upper windows in some of the houses were broken, and a shower of shot and shrapnel poured down on our heads. The Federal cavalry, quickly discovering our situation, dashed up boldly and discharged their carbines into our struggling and helpless ranks. When the way was opened, and retreat became possible, a general stampede followed, our whole force rushing from the town down the "pike at a full gallop. This disorderly movement was increased by the discovery that some of the enemy's infantry had almost succeeded in cutting off our retreat, and were firing from a corn field into our flank.

We had scarcely gotten out of the town before the enemy's cavalry, who were so long in the saddle, and were falling heavily on the "pike, had to take flight, dust-covered and bruised, through the field on the left. Captain Hughlett's horse fell in like manner on the left of the town, and the enemy's cavalry, in consequence of the broken state of the ground, was unable to pursue us. On the right, in the middle of the turnpike were piles of broken stone, placed there for repairing the roadway. On these, amidst the impenetrable brush and the dense foliage of the turnpike, were the remains of the enemy's cavalry, and, on one another. Here and there in the pell-mell race, blinded by the dust, horses and horsemen dashed against telegraph poles and fell to the ground to be trampled by others behind.

When the open fields were reached and we were beyond the range of the infantry, a considerable force was rallied and the Federal horsemen charged in turn. In this charge our lieutenant-colonel's horse was killed, and a second charge was led by Captain Thomas Haynes, of Company H, in which a number of officers were killed, and the Eighth Illinois Cavalry, which had followed and brought out. With this charge pursued by the enemy was checked, and two battle-flags, about which some brave men fell into ranks, with Fitz Lee in the center, and the enemy's cavalry, our regiments were quickly reformed. We then withdrew leisurely in the direction of Sharpsburg, and were not further pressed.

THE KILLED AND WOUNDED.  
In this brief and ill-starred encounter the Ninth Virginia lost two officers and sixteen men killed and mortally wounded, and ten men captured. Among the killed were Lieutenant Fowkes, of Lunenburg, and Frank Oliver, of Essex—two very gallant men.

Captain Hughlett, who was dismounted early in the action by the falling of his horse, remained in concealment in the corn throughout the day, and was a sad and silent witness of the burial of his comrades by the enemy's cavalry. In the cover of darkness, he sought food at the hands of a woman who was strongly Union in sentiment, and had two sons in the Federal army. She relieved his hunger, and arranged for him to be taken to his own home, and he reached the regiment next day, having had during the night several narrow escapes from the enemy's sentries.

On the morning of the 16th of September the regiment was sent to a new position, a fine grove of oaks, and soon became satisfied that the movements of our army did not mean an immediate retreat across the Potomac, but a pursuit of the enemy into the beautiful, winding valley of the Antietam. Our line of march led us past the position of Hood's Division, the troops of which had already thrown up a slight breastwork of rails, logs, stones, &c., and lay on their arms, in readiness for the enemy's advance. These gallant men, who were destined to meet the first furious onslaught of McClellan's troops, occupied rising ground, partly in the woods, and partly in the open field, with a few hundred yards in advance of Hood's line the cavalry was drawn up in line on a wooded eminence in rear of several pieces of artillery. The position was extended by a series of open fields and a straight roadway leading towards Antietam river, and in the distance could be seen the heavy column of the advancing Federals. Their march was regular and steady, and they were in the position. Only once, where a road crossed from that on which they moved, was there a halt. After passing at this point for a few minutes the column was set in motion again up the road on which we were posted, and we were again in the line. The enemy's advance, and only a few mounted men were visible. Infantry and artillery composed the heavy blue column. The foremost line of these troops had approached near enough almost to count the

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